

Foreword

Welcome

أهلاً وسهلاً



Welcome to another edition of Kingdom to Kingdom magazine. I hope that as you read it you will get a sense of the breadth and depth of the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. We have a shared history, and I am confident we will be partners for many years to come.

The last few months have been overshadowed by the terrible events in Gaza. We all witnessed the unacceptable suffering, the innocents caught by the violence. The British government was clear from the beginning that violence would lead only to violence, and so we called for an immediate ceasefire. The Foreign Secretary David Miliband and HRH Prince Saud al Faisal worked together incredibly closely at the United Nations in New York to achieve Security Council Resolution 1860 which paved the way for the eventual ceasefire. Now we are all focussed on two things: supporting the ceasefire to ensure that the violence does not erupt again; and delivering desperately needed humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.

Because Gaza is at the forefront of my mind, it can be hard to remember the important work and co-operation that has been going on in the last few months. Most importantly November saw the visit of the Prime Minister Gordon Brown to Riyadh. It was the Prime Minister's second visit to the Kingdom in six months and his visit reflected the importance of the partnership between the two Kingdoms.

Mr Brown came at the head of the most senior business and ministerial delegation ever to leave the UK. In a very short space of time, the visit reinforced the wide ranging business relationship which benefits both Saudi and British business. As the world faces the international financial crisis and looks towards the London Summit at the beginning of April we need more trade not less. Britain and Saudi Arabia are thankfully well placed to build on our trade relationship.

The last few months have also seen the London Energy Meeting which was the continuation of the process started by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Jeddah in June. The wisdom of bringing energy consumers and producers together was demonstrated again at the London meeting, at which the Oil Minister, HE Ali al-Naimi played a crucial role.

And of course there have been a range of projects which have blossomed from the partnership and shared interests of the two Kingdoms. We hope that the next few months will see the second instalment of the Two Kingdoms Dialogue, which was first held when the Custodian made his historic State Visit to London. I hope that this year's Dialogue will allow Britain and Saudi Arabia to continue to learn from each other. It will also build enduring relationships between individual Saudis and the British people.

I hope you enjoy the magazine. If you have any comments or feedback please do get in touch.

Sir William Patey KCMG
British Ambassador